

# Little Book of Instructions for Christian Mothers

---

*From Mother Love – A Manual for  
Christian Mothers*

---

*By Rev. Pius Franciscus, OFM Cap*

# **Little Book of Instructions for Christian Mothers**

From *Mother Love – A Manual for Christian Mothers*

**By Rev. Pius Franciscus, OFM Cap**

1926

# Contents

Chapter I Early Cares.....	1
Chapter II New and More Difficult Cares .....	6
Chapter III Admonition to the Mother.....	10
Chapter IV Combating Concupiscence of the Flesh.....	15
Chapter V Combating Concupiscence of the Eyes .....	21
Chapter VI Combating Pride.....	24
Chapter VII Rewards and Punishments .....	29
Chapter VIII The Father's Role.....	33
Chapter IX Prayers .....	37
Chapter X Maxims and Sayings.....	44
Chapter XI Co-operation with Pastor and Teacher .....	50
Chapter XIII Preparing a Child for Confession.....	55
Chapter XV Care of Young Adults .....	68

# Chapter I Early Cares

As soon as the Christian Mother becomes aware that a new being has been engendered in her womb through the power of God, she should immediately offer it up to God, and again and again commend it to His fatherly care and protection in aspirations and words which her own mother-heart suggests. During the months of its development she must carefully avoid unwholesome food, undue exertion, and still more all passionate outbursts of impatience and anger, of grief and worry, of excessive sorrow and care. She must, moreover, refrain from vain and proud thoughts as well as from inclinations and emotions not in keeping with perfect purity. On the other hand, she should constantly strive to remain calm and unruffled in all adverse circumstances, foster a devout and contented disposition, pray earnestly, and receive the Holy Sacraments frequently and worthily; briefly, she should seek to be as she expects her child to be some day. All her troubles and pains and suffers she should offer to God as so many means to draw down upon herself and her child heaven's choicest blessings and graces, and she should gratefully acknowledge God's goodness not only in joyous events but also in unpleasant and disagreeable affairs.

After the child's birth she should look upon it as a gift of God and as His image, created for His greater honor and glory. She should consider herself as God's agent to whom the child has been entrusted and, therefore, she should love it, watch over it, provide for it, and protect it. All this should be done in a systematic manner and under the guidance of the

moral teachings of Holy Church as well as the approved methods of pious and prominent educators.

The newborn child has at best a frail physical constitution and, if it were not tenderly cared for, it would soon become a victim of death. But its spiritual condition is even more delicate. In consequence of the original sin in which it was born, it is a child of wrath, and if it should die in that state, it would be forever deprived of the vision of God and of the incomprehensible happiness and bliss connected therewith. Surely, no truly Christian mother would endanger the eternal happiness of her child by letting it remain in this state of original sin even one day longer than is absolutely necessary.

The first duty, then, of a Christian Mother is to provide for the baptism of her child within one week or, at least, within two weeks after its birth. The baptism must take place in the church of the parish in which the parents live, or in which the child is born. A godfather and a godmother should be provided according to the instructions of the Church. The godparents should be well instructed in the rudiments of the Faith and also true to its practices, because before God and the Church, they take upon themselves, together with the parents, and second only to these, the responsibility for the Christian education of the child.

The choice of a name for the child is most dear to the mother's heart. It may be her own or that of the father, of one of the sponsors, or of any other, provided that it be the name of a saint whose life-story she knows, to whom she has a great devotion, and from whom she expects for the little newcomer every loving and powerful protection. She may look forward eagerly to the time when she will relate to her

child the beautiful incidents in the life of its patron or patroness, and when she will tell of the love and care with which its powerful patron watches over all its footsteps. Even now ardent ejaculations arise from the mother's heart—ejaculations which, later on, will form in the consecrated heart of the child and on its innocent lips those devout aspirations that will pierce the clouds.

At the time of its birth or immediately thereafter the life of the child may be in danger. If such be the case, the mother should at once insist on the private baptism of the child. The minister of the private baptism may be the attending doctor or mid-wife or a relative or one of the attendants; but if none of these would know how to administer private baptism; either the father or the mother should administer the sacrament. The proper manner is the following:

**The one who baptizes should take ordinary water, pour it on the head of the child, and, while pouring it, should speak the words:**

**“I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”**

If the child should recover, it should be taken to church as soon as advisable, to have the ceremonies of solemn baptism supplied. The priest, who performs the ceremony, should be informed of the previous private Baptism and also of the manner in which it was administered.

When the child has received holy Baptism, the first and most necessary thing has been accomplished; namely, the greatest evil that had befallen it has been removed, original sin has been removed, original sin has been washed away, and the wrath of Almighty God has been averted from an-

other of Adam's posterity. The young soul now shines with a luster and beauty that make it more like an angel than a mortal. He may now raise his eyes to Jesus Christ and call Him his Friend, his Brother, and his Spouse. With Jesus' lips and Jesus' Heart and Jesus' confidence, he may now call the Eternal Father his own dear Father and himself His beloved child. He is now all this in perfect truth. Is there a dignity on earth to be compared with this? If emperors and kings had jurisdiction over the whole world, but were not in the state of grace, their honor, majesty, and glory would be far beneath, indeed, would be nothing in comparison with the dignity of this little child of God.

If the child, having received valid Baptism, dies before reaching the age of reason, before being capable of actual sin, it goes straight to heaven, there to praise God among the choirs of blessed spirits. The happiness secured to it for all eternity, no human tongue can express. The delights that earth can offer, the joys of the earthly paradise, all are nothing compared with the felicity prepared by God for His chosen ones in heaven. The difference between the former and the latter is far wider, far greater than that existing between a drop of water and the vast ocean, a ray of sunshine and the sun itself.

Whether the child be living or dead, the Christian mother does not neglect, on making her first visit to Church, to beg the priest to church her [i.e. give her the blessing after childbirth, called "the churcing of women"]. In either case she owes God thanks for protection and deliverance from greater danger; and she cannot offer thanksgiving more pleasing to God than that which the priest utters over her in the name of

the Church. If the child is living, there rests upon her the responsibility of providing for its temporal and eternal welfare; and for this the blessing of the Church is indispensable. Her first outing should be to the Church. The priest receives her at the entrance and sprinkles her with holy water as a sign of grace that the Church invokes upon her, and to strengthen her also to receive more efficacious blessings. She is afterward presented with a lighted taper as a sign of the good example which a Christian and a Catholic, and still more a Christian mother, should give her child and her whole family. The priest's stole is then laid on her hand, and she is led to the altar; because the treasures of salvation, which the Church holds for her and her child, are to be dispensed to her by the hand and the power of the priest. Having reached the altar, the priest offers prayers and thanksgivings for her and her child, and ends with reiterated prayers, blessings, and sprinkling with holy water. Christian mother, esteem not as unimportant this touching ceremony instituted by the Church for you alone, and which every priest will, at your request, consider it his duty to perform. Much is contained in it, as well for you as for the child.



## Chapter II New and More Difficult Cares

Through baptism the child is consecrated to the Divine Savior. It becomes His own property and possession, subject to Him and forever bound to Him, believing in Him, hoping in Him, and loving Him, disposed to live and act as He wills and as His example suggests. It is for the mother to help it on to this. If she is accustomed to follow her natural inclinations, she will find her task a most difficult one; for the life of the Divine Savior was in no way similar to that of our lower nature. It was diametrically opposed to it.

Our nature longs for temporal possessions, seeks after prosperity, riches, and affluence; but the life of Jesus was one of the greatest poverty. He possessed nothing on earth, not even a place whereon to rest His head.

Our nature loves comfort, seeks pleasures, entertainments, amusements; whereas the life of Jesus was full of privation, hardship, labor, pain, and suffering. It was an uninterrupted "Way of the Cross," a continued martyrdom, a perpetual penance.

Our nature prizes honor and a good name, strives after authority and high places, desires to see itself in power, loves display, titles, influence, command. The life of Jesus, on the contrary, was simple, His deportment unpretending. He avoided honors. He permitted calumnies, invectives, persecution. He stood as a criminal before the courts of justice; and, after the most cruel treatment, He died in the bitterest

pain upon the cross amid the triumph of His enemies.

Mary's maternal heart suffered inexpressibly during the injuries to which her Divine Son subjected Himself; but with all that she would not have had it otherwise. She knew and she constantly kept before her eyes that such was precisely the will of God, that it was in accordance with His eternal decrees for the human race, and most necessary for the atonement of sin and the salvation of souls.

In the same way, Christian mother, should you be disposed. A life of mortification of the natural inclinations is just as necessary for your child as for yourself. With original sin is engendered in nature inordinate concupiscence which excites to evil: the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. By the waters of Baptism, original sin is effaced; but the threefold concupiscence, although weakened, still remains. Your child possesses sufficient grace, and it will receive still more, in order victoriously to resist it; but it will have to struggle, and only by an uninterrupted succession of conflicts will it be able to hold its ground. You should stand by it, guarding, animating, and supporting it. You should steel your heart, and firmly oppose all the emotions, desires, and wishes that arise from the dark depths of its sinful nature. How will you be able to do this if you are not yourself a true follower of Jesus Christ, if you are not, as was the holy Mother of God, filled with the spirit of sacrifice and the love of the cross?

Mankind ever was and is still divided into two kingdoms, each opposed to the other, each warring against the other. In the one reigns the spirit of Jesus Christ, the spirit of self-denial and penance. Hearts are lovingly turned toward the Di-

vine Savior. They wish on earth nothing different from Him, they allow themselves to be ruled by His grace, and they go willingly along the route pointed out to them by his providence. Baptism admits to citizenship in this kingdom, in which the fundamental laws are faith, hope and charity. They are, also, the conditions of remaining in it. Let but only love be extinct, and the bond of union with Jesus Christ is broken; union of heart is dissolved, and the way into the opposite kingdom, into the enemies' camp, is entered upon.

The majority of mankind belongs to this Kingdom of Antichrist. They are all those that have in heart separated from Jesus Christ, have disbelieved His word, have not heard His Church, and have abandoned themselves to evil concupiscences. They are called in Holy Scripture, "The children of this world," because loving earthly pleasures, they have renounced those of heaven. According to the same sacred authority, their leader is the devil, who incites them to the gratification of their lower appetites, and by this halter leads them along a broad road and through a wide gate to eternal perdition.

Between these two kingdoms, Christian Mother, your child is placed. Love and the graces it has received lead it to Jesus Christ and His Church; evil concupiscence, on the contrary, inclines it to the world and the devil. It needs constant watchfulness on the part of the mother, even from its earliest years, to prevent the influence of such power over the soul of the child. If she fully performs her duty, then will her child, on coming to the use of reason, be prepared and ready for the combat against the snares of concupiscence and the allurements of the world. And if the mother continues to teach

and to guide it, it may happen that her child, neither in its earliest childhood, nor as a youth or maiden, a man or woman of mature age, will ever seriously turn away from the love of Jesus Christ. At the hour of death, it will resign to the earth a sinless body, and to heaven a spotless soul in all the splendor of Baptismal innocence. Happy such a mother! She will with great confidence stand before the Judge to receive the magnificent reward prepared for those that have not only loved Him to the end, but that have inspired others with the same love and have confirmed them in it.

But what of a child whose mother neglects it and through gross indifference permits evil passions to grow in its soul? There begins for such a little one with the dawn of reason, a life of sin; and it is not long before it falls mortally. Then are baptismal grace and baptismal innocence forever lost; penance is now the only way left by which it can be rescued. If, under the influence of strong passions, of great worldliness, this way of penance is rejected or adopted without a determined resolution to combat temptation, then, alas, the child will be lost! O what a severe account will the mother have to render at the judgment seat of God when He shall demand of her the soul of her child! Where is that soul which He loved so unspeakably, which He entrusted to her in its holiness and innocence, and which she should have restored to Him in that same holiness and innocence!

## Chapter III Admonition to the Mother

Above all things, Christian mother, you yourself should be animated with the love of Christ! You should be a pious disciple, a courageous soldier of Jesus Christ, a Catholic Christian ardently desirous of the attainment of virtue. Have you not been such from your early youth? Be such, at least, and with redoubled earnestness, from the day on which you feel that you are a mother. Permit not the poison of un-mortified passions to flow with your milk and life-blood into the heart of your child. That poison will, in later life, expose it to numerous and violent temptations, and even to the danger of eternal damnation. When you carry it in your arms, let Christian meekness, peace, and love beam in your eyes; for your child understands their language, and responds to it eagerly in its own little heart. When it begins to lisp and, under your direction, tries to stammer its first word, then teach it as its first word, not “Mamma,” or “Papa,” but that name which should be to you also the sweetest and the dearest of all names, namely, the name of Jesus, which will rise as a loving sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise to its Creator, its Redeemer, its Judge, and its Savior. The second should be that which, next to the name of Jesus, has the sweetest sound, namely the dear name of our heavenly Mother Mary. Believe me, the child will experience something of the blessing of these sweet names which causes hell to tremble and heaven to thrill with joy.

Teach your child by your own example. Let all your words and actions in its presence bear upon them the impress of innocence and Christian piety. The child hangs upon you as the apple on the tree, and draws from your deportment and expressions nourishment for the life of its soul. Ah, give it not poison. Supply it with Christian, edifying, enlightening, consoling food; and as its years multiply, be still more careful on this point.

Hold pious converse with your child as soon as it is capable of answering. Sing to it holy hymns, and teach it to sing them after you. Pray with your child. Teach it to repeat with joined hands the words of the prayers after you. If it does not understand your words, it certainly does comprehend your devotion; and the Holy Ghost who dwells in its soul, will effect in its depths the wonders of His inexpressible love.

Pray for your child. You could not free it from original sin, had God not seconded your pious desire by holy Baptism; and just as little, without the grace and mercy of God, can you release it from the threefold concupiscence and imbue it with Christian sentiments. The Divine Savior alone can do that, for He has said: “Without Me you can do nothing.”<sup>1</sup> Turn, then, to Him. Entreat Him, expect everything from His blessing, and attach to your own efforts only as much value as the Lord will be pleased by His helping hand to supply. You must, indeed, “always pray and never faint,”<sup>2</sup> as the Divine Savior teaches. For as it is your duty ever to provide for the good of your child, so must Jesus Christ constantly lend you His support that you may always make use of the right

---

<sup>1</sup> John 15:5

<sup>2</sup> Luke 18:1

word and the right manner of acting; namely, that which, springing from the Heart of Jesus, will bear fruits of salvation. May your heart, O Christian Mother, be ever as full of prayer to God as it is at all times full of love for your children!

Be watchful and combat the threefold concupiscence in the heart[s] of your children, wherever and as soon as it shows itself. Do not wait until bad habits have become deeply rooted. Keep the pruning knife always at hand, and cut away the wild branches as soon as they put forth their little heads. What may be easily removed in the beginning might later on cost you years of bitter tears, tears of heartfelt regret, and even then you might be unable to effect a reform. Rear your little one in such a way that the power of its evil inclinations may be broken before it knows what evil is. Well disposed and carefully reared children, even at the early age of four, no longer need corporal chastisement, no longer have need of severe correction; a glance, a gentle sign or a word is sufficient. Still, I know well that children are not alike. Some give more trouble and take longer to correct than others. But if a child over twelve years of age still needs chastisements, it is, for the most part, a sign that in the administration of such punishment in the past, something has been wanting.

Bring before your child the words and example of Jesus, as soon as it is able to understand. Has it been guilty of some naughtiness, say: "Little Jesus never did anything like that!" "Ah, now you are grieving dear little Jesus!" "What would the little Child Jesus think were you to do such a thing!" If the child has performed some good action, say: "That's the way little Jesus used to do!" "He says, 'if you love Me keep My commandments!'" "He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My

words!” “Jesus loves good little children!” Or again, “Jesus Christ forbids that!” or, “Jesus commands this,” etc.

Be not without anxiety when your children are out of the house. You know how inexperienced, innocent, and thoughtless they are. Do not permit them to go into neighbors’ houses, or to any place in which you are not sure that their innocence and their soul’s welfare will receive no harm. Give them rules, instructions, and warnings for their conduct on the street; and on their return inquire how they have behaved themselves, what they did and said, what they heard. Make yourself acquainted with these points by means of others, and direct your future line conduct by what you may discover. Many a child well guarded at home has learned wickedness out-doors and stained its soul.

If the child gives evidence of possessing one of the three concupiscences in an especially strong form, search your own heart and actions, notice the disposition and life of the father, and see whether the same inclination is not found there. Consider whether or not up to the present you have taken serious action against it. Resolve now, at least, to free yourself from it. Facilitate by your own conversion that of your child; by your own improvement, the improvement of the child.

And when you have done all that lies in your power, say in your heart: “I am a useless servant. I have done what I was obliged to do, and by far not as I should have done.”<sup>3</sup> The good results that you observe in the child, attribute humbly to divine grace, ascribing to yourself only faults and sins; and beg Almighty God to repair and forgive the harm you have

---

<sup>3</sup> cf. Luke 17:10



done your child. Then your merit and reward will be truly great, if you refer to God alone all the honor your children bring you.

# Chapter IV Combating Concupiscence of the Flesh

The first evil inclination, the concupiscence of the flesh, seeks inordinately after all that gratifies the body, tickles the senses, and excites them to pleasure. Certainly the physical needs must be provided for and the sense activities must be exercised, otherwise life would not be worth living. But, how easily may the proper measure of enjoyment be exceeded, and thus that which might have been, according to St. Paul, a source of heavenly merit and for the greater honor and glory of God, is turned into a source of demerit, sin, and punishment!

If then, dear Christian mother, you do not want your child to become the slave of sensual and carnal pleasures, you must train it from its earliest years to self-restraint and self-denial, to application and industry, to order and cleanliness. Among other things therefore a prudent Christian mother will provide for a thorough ventilation of the living and the bed rooms, so that wholesome, fresh air may constantly fill them. She will provide for the children plain nourishing food, sensible clothing, and a neat comfortable bed; on the other hand, she will withhold from them everything that merely indulges the sensual appetite or wantonly excites the nerves. Children must not be permitted to eat as much and as often as they please, but whatever their reasonable needs demand should be granted kindly and graciously. Cookies and candies and other palate-ticklers should not be

allowed too frequently, since experience teaches that excessive munching of sweetmeats is not only injurious to the teeth and stomach but also to the general health. Try to impress upon the minds of your little ones, Christian mother, that it is a good work occasionally to give up some creature comforts and enjoyments for the love of God, that God especially loves children who act that way and rewards them for it in body and soul. Performing such little mortifications with a good intention is a powerful means of obtaining many favors from God. But in these mortifications children should be supervised so that they may not overdo them.

A Christian mother should let her children play much in the open air, even when the weather is somewhat cold and unpleasant. She should put them to bed early and in the morning also get them out early. They should be taught to get up immediately on the first call, to dress themselves quickly and to make their morning ablutions with cold water. Each child should have its own little daily work to do according to its age and strength, and a fixed time to do it. Dresses and coats, hats and caps, shoes and slippers, as well as playthings should not be allowed to be scattered around, and for everything that belongs to a child there should be a fixed place and it must be trained to put them in the proper places itself. Dirty hands and dirty faces as well as dirty clothes must never be tolerated.

Children should always be cheerful not only at their games and recreations but also at their work and even in their little trials and hurts. As early in life as possible they should be taught that the afflictions and reverses of life, such as excessive cold or heat, slander or gossip, offenses and in-

sults and abuse, sickness and wounds and death, are blessings in disguise and sent by God to wean us from the world and its attractions and arouse in us a greater love and desire for the eternal joys of heaven. They should also be taught to see in them a means which God provides, to atone for our sins, our faults and imperfections. Finally, they should be taught that Jesus Christ Himself was willing to endure the same or similar afflictions during His life here on earth, and that it is a mark of great love of Christ to be satisfied to live amid the same conditions as He did and to bear willingly what He was willing to bear.

Many things are sources of pleasure to children. In the first place there are the things of nature itself. These captivate the eyes of children by their beauty and variety. Naturally, the child admires them, asks questions about them, and is happy in knowing them. A Christian mother will not only call attention to their beauty and variety of arrangement, but she will also show how they are evidences of God's goodness and love as well as proofs of His infinite wisdom and power. The parish church is another source of joy to the child: its majestic appearance, its length and width and height on the outside, and on the inside its altars and their ornamentation, its pews and pictures and statues, its pulpit and confessionals. Gradually, the mother should teach the child the purpose and meaning of them all, so that it may learn to appreciate them as the means by which the salvation of mankind is effected. The feasts of the Church should give the mother opportunities for explanations and stories from the life of Christ in order to instill a greater love of Christ into the heart of her child; when occasion offers she will also narrate stories from

the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that the child's affection for our heavenly Mother may constantly grow and confidence in her tender mercy may increase. Again and again she will tell of the lives of different saints, of their zeal for their own salvation as well as for the salvation of the souls of others and of their love of God and His glory. All that was ever learned in Catechism or Bible History, in sermons or conference, in the Lives of the Saints or some other spiritual book, the Christian mother will impart to her little ones in such simple words that even the youngest may understand. Her efforts will surely be blessed by God and she will enjoy not only the pleasure of gladdening the hearts of her children by her story-telling but will also be rewarded by the earnest endeavors with which her children will try to imitate the virtues of Jesus and Mary and of the saints.

Another species of joy is derived from home-life and the intimate associations of the family members. Home, sweet home! Oh, that every home were so sweet and inviting, so pleasant and cheery, that neither father nor children would ever desire to be anywhere else but with and around mother! In such a home every day is the herald of new joys, and certain occasions such as the nameday or birthday of father, mother, brother, or sister and the anniversary of some joyous, important event, are celebrated in a festive manner with some innocent amusements and recreation and sincere testimonies of mutual affection.

In this manner the children will be protected against the deceitful allurements of carnal and worldly pleasures which alas! are only too often the death of purity and innocence. Would to God that every mother at least realized her respon-

sibility in this matter! It may be safely affirmed that the loss of the sense of shame and modesty, so noticeable among the youth of the present generation, is primarily due to the indifference of mothers in observing proper precautions in bathing, dressing, and bedding her little ones. Other causes are frequently assigned such as the prevailing fashions of the day, the promiscuous gatherings of young people in dance-halls and amusement places and the modern dances themselves, but all these should be considered as contributing causes merely, since the seed of immodesty and shamelessness was sowed earlier in life.

I can only indicate the sowing of this seed by telling what a mother should not do. A Christian mother will never bathe a child while other children are looking on, nor will she bathe them together at the same time. She will never strip them entirely to change their underwear in the presence of others; she will always have separate rooms and beds for her boys and girls. She will earnestly reprimand even the least breach against modesty and, if repeated, she should severely punish the offender. True, the little one may not understand the indecency of its act, but it is important to impress upon it the gravity of the fault by the infliction of some punishment so that it may not in later life fall into sins which, more than all others, are the cause of eternal damnation. The girls, in particular, should be trained in Christian modesty, which includes also decency in dress. Fashions change with the times, so that sooner or later we may expect some improvement in present-day styles; but a mother who today dresses her girls in fashionable décolleté and sleeveless undress is surely not preventing the violation of the sense of modesty, and is, in-

deed, contributing to the moral laxity of her daughters.

As the children grow older, the vigilance of parents must become more alert, so that the boys and girls may not become victims of vicious companions who are ever ready to initiate the innocent into the clandestine and sinful methods of sex gratification. As soon as parents observe in their boys and girls a curiosity regarding sex, it would be highly imprudent to conceal from them the desired sex-knowledge, because they will not content themselves with evasions, and the danger is lest they obtain that knowledge in a crude and sinful way. Tell them briefly and frankly what they desire to know, and at the same time warn them against speaking on such subjects with outsiders and encourage them to seek all sex-information from you only—the girls from mother and the boys from father. But also, according to the age of the children, admonish them to preserve their mind[s] and heart[s] pure and chaste through an earnest devotion to the Immaculate Blessed Virgin, who is ever ready to help and protect us in all unprovoked dangers and temptations.

# Chapter V Combating Concupiscence of the Eyes

The second evil propensity, the concupiscence of the eyes, is the inordinate pleasure in things which attract the eye, such as riches, clothes, houses, furniture, etc. Holy Scripture says: “What doth it profit the owner of riches, except to feast his eyes on them?”<sup>1</sup>

The child must be made to realize that it has, properly speaking, nothing of its own, that everything belongs to its parents. The things a child receives from them should be considered a gift, for which it owes them a debt of gratitude. It should also be made to understand that even its parents can call nothing their own, that all they have is loaned to them and should be used for performing works of love and mercy according to the Will of God. Furthermore, the child should be taught to consider the poor its equals, and be glad to share with them whatever they need, so that in the day of judgment it may be rewarded for its helpfulness as having done unto Christ whatever was done unto the least of His brethren. Poverty, in general, should be appreciated as a visitation and a grace of God, by which men become like unto the Master and worthy of eternal life. Heaven should be described to the child as a land teeming with riches and treasures, the least part of which is more valuable than all the accumulated values of the whole world. Finally, the child should be taught that riches and possessions are rather dan-

---

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes 5:10



gerous for the soul and that rich people who are not poor in spirit, whose hearts are not detached from the things of this world, have a hard time saving their souls, as Christ Himself says, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven.”<sup>2</sup> Poverty, on the other hand, with its privations, when borne with patience and for the love and glory of God, is a rich source of eternal merit and reward.

Pilfering, which is frequently practiced among children, should be earnestly censured, because it is petty thieving; and continued pilfering as well as larger thefts should be severely punished. A child should never be allowed to take anything without permission, and whatever it needs, it should be obliged to ask for. If the child’s wishes are granted, it should be required to express its thanks, and, if they be refused, it should be trained to accept the refusal with submission and never be permitted to show its disappointment by pouting or grumbling. It should be taught gladly to share with others whatever it has received for its own use or pleasure. When others have more, or prettier, or better things, it should be taught to rejoice in their greater fortune, while on the other hand it should deeply sympathize with the losses of others as if those losses were its own. Gifts of money, which a child sometimes receives from friends and relatives, should not be at its own disposal, nor should it have the control of its own little money-bank. Money expenditures for any purpose whatever should always have the permission and the approval of the parents.

Combating the spirit of the world and the inordinate love

---

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 19:24

for temporal possessions, fostering in her children the spirit of Christ, and arousing in their hearts an ardent desire for heavenly things—it is these duties that a Christian mother should consider her most important task, and what we have said may assist her in her very arduous task.

# Chapter VI Combating Pride

In the last two chapters I have briefly pointed out how a Christian Mother may successfully counteract in a child its inborn lust of the eyes and of the flesh. The means recommended are, indeed, effective but not infallible, unless the mother will reinforce her instructions, her admonitions and her corrections by the mortification of her own evil inclinations and by presenting to her children in her own daily life an example of self-denial and restraint. Teaching and good example are practically certain of producing favorable results under the grace of God. In the present chapter I shall give a more detailed instruction on the manner of combating the third concupiscence, called by St. John the pride of life. The conquering of this concupiscence is more difficult, because the sins caused by it seemingly contain something elevating and pure, although they are more offensive to God and more destructive to the soul. Some pious author distinguished the lust of the eyes as a human fault, the lust of the flesh as a bestial aberration, but the pride of life as a hellish, a devilish guilt. Pride is, indeed, the worst of the three concupiscences and must, therefore, be combated just as relentlessly as the other two.

St. Michael the Archangel with the cry—Who is like to God—drove the bad angels out of heaven and out of the company of the good angels. In the same manner a Christian Mother should contemplate the dignity and majesty of God, and remember His rightful claim upon our worship and submission; hence like St. Michael she must not relax in her efforts,

until the devil of pride is cast out of the heart of her child, and the child itself, strengthened in earnest piety, has become an angel of humility and modesty, of obedience and good deportment.

The first visible sign of pride in a child is willfulness. In combating it, the mother must, indeed, manifest a knowing and prudent love which never connives at a child's contrariness or humors its exhibitions of obstinacy. The child may weep and cry, it may fuss and stomp its feet—the more unruly it conducts itself, the more the mother must ignore it. Such treatment will soon put an end to its noisy demonstrations, and the child will gradually show a more tractable disposition. Then also insist on immediate and prompt obedience. "A good child must obey quickly."

Irreverence, stubbornness, and insubordination must not be tolerated. A command given by father or mother must be carried out, and the child that will not obey should be banished from the table and from the presence of father and mother and no conciliatory countenance be turned to it until it has fulfilled the will of its parents. Certainly the directions and the commands of father and mother must not exceed the limitations of the child; they should be reasonable and well-considered, and be given with dignified earnestness, in brief and gentle words, and with perceptible marks of affection. Children should be taught to obey cheerfully to please their parents; they should obey conscientiously, whether they be observed or not, because Jesus Christ gave the example of obedience, because parents are representatives of God, because the will of the parents is the will of God, because obedience or disobedience to them is obedience or disobedience

to God, and therefore will be rewarded or punished by God.

Considerate and affectionate demands on the part of the parents, and ready, cheerful obedience on the part of the children are the foundation stones of a good education. When, therefore, a good education is not achieved, it is usually due to some defect in the exercise of parental authority or in the observance of filial submission. Generally speaking, the greatest fault is on the side of the parents. Children are so completely dependent on their parents, that they must practically obey, if the parents earnestly insist upon it. When the children are disobedient, disrespectful, bold and spiteful, there is no other cause but lack of firmness and enforcement of parental rights. In every Christian family one principle must always stand forth in the fullness of its meaning, namely: Not the will of the children is law, but the children must obey the will of the parents without exception and without contradiction.

Other manifestations of pride are meddlesomeness, lying, and an assumption of cleverness and wisdom. Among girls are to be found especially dissimulation, self-love, vanity and conceit. A child must be trained to be truthful and sincere in its words and its conduct, and simple and modest in all its dealings with others. Whatever good it may possess, it should consider an undeserved gift of God, for which it must be grateful, and of the use of which it must some day render a strict account. The child's attention should be called to its own shortcomings, and at the same time be directed to the good qualities of others, to the virtues of the saints, and to the perfections of God, so that it may learn to think lowly of itself and willingly humble itself before others.

Pride shows itself also in quarrelsomeness, in lording it over others, and in vengefulness. Among boys, in particular, we also find as a fruit of pride a certain spirit of independence which brooks no restraint, and ambition that tolerates no rivalry, and a coarseness of feeling that borders on brutality. All these qualities are evidences of a hard heart and must be corrected with a firm hand; and, if no improvement is observed, mother and father should even resort to severe corporal punishment. After the child's natural roughness has been pretty well polished off in this manner, it must also be taught to get rid of its sensitiveness or touchiness and to conquer its natural aversions or dislikes. The wonderful example of Christ should constantly be kept before its mind, especially His patient endurance of all kinds of injuries, His imperturbable meekness and mildness, and His ever ready willingness to forgive His enemies and traducers for whom He even prayed after they nailed Him to the Cross. Surely this example will have a powerful influence over the impressionable child-mind and inspire the child to earnest efforts of imitation.

The worst fruits of human pride are sins against God Himself, namely, indifference to religion and religious practices. These manifest themselves by repeated neglect of divine service, particularly, of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, by irreverent conduct in Church and at devotional exercises, by desecration of the Lord's Day and feast days of obligation, by superstitious observances and mockery of religion, by ridiculing the veneration of the saints, their pictures and relics, by cursing and sinful taking of oaths and such other sins against the three first commandments of the decalogue. In-

difference towards God and all that relates to Him is, indeed, at the bottom of man's perversity as of all sin, and only in so far as this indifference can be rooted out, can the heart of man be remodeled and the image of the Divinity be restored in him. Hence the principal efforts must be directed towards this purpose and parents must never cease till they have implanted into the hearts of their children a sincere love of God and a salutary filial fear of Him, till they have awakened in them an ardent zeal for His honor and glory and an eager, joyous readiness to live according to His Will. In this matter, particularly, parents must give a good example, so that the child may see that they themselves are sincerely and truly religious.

The parents must also carefully observe the child at its prayers, never condone any fault in the recital of them, immediately correct any faulty pronunciation of the names of God or of the saints, and, in general, supervise its conduct in all matters pertaining to religion and its practices. Faults and sins against the first three commandments must not be considered lightly and should be earnestly reprehended and, if necessary, more severely punished than faults and sins against any other commandment. The degree of firmness with which parents persist in their efforts to educate and train their children in the proper reverence towards God and religion will naturally depend upon the degree of esteem in which they hold their dignity as representatives of God and guardians of His honor; the more they realize the dignity of their position, the more they will uphold and defend the rights of God.

# Chapter VII Rewards and Punishments

A stubborn evil spirit that resists the ordinary means of control is driven out, according to the words of our Lord, by prayer and fasting. This is also the means by which deeply-rooted defects and faults in children must be driven out. Prayer and fasting will win. Still as long as a child is young enough to be coerced, it should be compelled to pray and fast in its own behalf, though it may be good and advisable that a mother pray for such a child and offer for it many personal acts of self-denial. Prayer humbles the spirit, while fasting chastens the flesh and is the sovereign remedy against sensuality.

This two-fold means is indicated in all cases which do not yield to admonitions and remonstrances, nor to kind words or threats. The mother should consider the source of the fault—pride or sensuality—and choose the remedy accordingly. But she should remember that prayer alone, though very efficacious, will not in itself subdue a proud spirit. It is also necessary to make the child feel humiliation. This may be done by showing preference to its brothers and sisters, by being brief and curt, by disregarding its advances, by isolating it from the others, and by other such minor humiliations.

Repeated faults of sensuality are most easily conquered by denying a child a dessert or some delicacies and knick-knacks for which it may have a special predilection; in extreme cases, some favorite dish or necessary food may also



be denied. In serious breaches of sensuality, the child should be compelled to sleep on a hard, springless bed, or some other physical chastisement be administered with the palm of the hand or with the rattan or rod. Hardness of heart against the poor should be conquered by distributing alms to the needy through the hand of the child, avarice and greed may be corrected by depriving the child of things to which it may be much attached and by insisting upon its sharing liberally with its brothers and sisters whatever it possesses. The same means, namely distributing alms through the hands of the child and denial of the comforts and luxuries of life, may be used when the child is inclined to extravagance.

The choice of the particular punishment to be administered in the individual case must be a subject of intelligent study. A mother's intention must never be merely the infliction of pain, but rather the amendment of the child. Severe punishments should only be resorted to when light punishments produce no results. The punishment, also, which was fixed upon, should never be applied more severely than necessary, and it should always be administered with due regard for the child's physical condition.

Frequent mistakes are made in the choice and infliction of chastisement. They are mostly administered without reflection, on the spur of the moment and thoughtlessly. On one occasion, parents will punish excessively, and on another not enough, or not at all. Would to God that every mother and every father understood the value of conscientious punishment! The punishment of children has for its object the correction and amendment of faults, and if it is to produce these results, parents must consider it one of their most im-

portant obligations, the faithful fulfillment of which becomes a source of untold benefit to their boys and girls and also the occasion of infinite merits to themselves.

However, it is not sufficient to inculcate merely a fear of sin in the hearts of children by the infliction of some punishment; parents must also instill in them a love of virtue for its own sake and for the sake of the joys and rewards attached to the practice of virtue. This may be done by portraying to them the inner peace which is consequent upon the doing of good works in the service of God and of our neighbor, and by describing in some appropriate story the unrest and remorse of conscience which the sinner experiences after his misdeeds.

Parents should not be chary of words of commendation and encouragement when a child perseveringly strives to get rid of some fault, or when it has performed some act of self-denial, of patience, of kindness, of obedience, or of forgiveness, which perhaps required no little moral courage. Indeed, mother and father should show sincere pleasure in any act of virtue that the child might perform, and at times, even reward it with some material recompense. Still, in doing so, they should remind the child of the greater pleasure which God has in its well-doing, and how He will reward it with the eternal happiness of His own heavenly home, if it will only persevere in its efforts till the end of its days.

Valuable presents and extraordinary pleasures should rarely be given as a reward. Trifling gifts and minor enjoyments may be granted, but not too frequently, otherwise the child may learn to despise them. The child should never join in the amusements proper to adults only, neither should it be

drawn into their cares and worries. The longer we can preserve in the children the simplicity and the innocence of childhood, the more shall we be able also to preserve in them the spirit of docility and obedience and their love for the simple pleasures of home-life.

# Chapter VIII The Father's Role

During the first months of its early life the child is entirely dependent upon the care of its mother. After a year or so this dependence is not so absolute, yet the child could not thrive without mother's tender love and care. In these early years, the father would be a practical stranger to the child, unless mother roused in its little heart sentiments of love and affection for him, and this should be done from its earliest life and continued through the succeeding years, because this is of the utmost importance to the child. Neither father nor mother individually is sufficient to do justice to all the various demands of a child's education and training, and they need each other's cooperation in this difficult task. Mother should consider it a special favor to God to be aided in this task by the clearer judgment and the sterner determination of her husband and the father of her children, since these are a necessary supplement to her own womanly tenderness, sentiment, and affection.

Hitherto we have directed these instructions and admonitions to the mother only, but in doing so we did not intend to convey the impression as if the father were not concerned in the rearing and the training of the children; on the contrary what we have pointed out as the duties and the obligations of the mother applies just as well to the father. It is quite true that the father's work and business do not permit as close an association with the children in their daily life, yet he must

be interested in the success of mother's efforts and second them with the weight of his authority. In particular, the father must give his children a good example by the probity of his daily life, by regular attendance at divine services and frequent reception of the sacraments.

Harmony between father and mother is an absolute necessity in the proper rearing of the children. Father and mother must agree in the methods as well as in the means employed, so that the children may be sure that the will of the father is also the will of the mother, and the commands of the mother are also the commands of the father. The children should never be permitted to discover any difference of opinion or any discord between father and mother regarding the management of them. When a child has failed to show mother that consideration and obedience which is her due, the father should at once sharply rebuke its remissness; and if, on the other hand, it has shown any disrespect to father, the mother should at once severely reprimand it. It may happen that one of the parents has made a mistake; in this case the other one must nevertheless safeguard the authority of the mistaking one in every possible way without, however, approving the mistake. In short, the parents must appear to the child as one person, as having the same rights and authority over it, to whom it owes love, reverence, and obedience in the same degree.

In training a child to proper respect and obedience, the mother's example is very important. Her vocation as a wife imposes upon her the duty of respect towards her husband, because according to the doctrine of the Church, the husband is the head of the family. She must render to him sub-

mission and obedience because he is the master of the house. Mothers sometimes complain that their children's conduct is frequently the source of much worry and anxiety. This worry and anxiety may easily have arisen from the fact that things are topsy-turvy at home. The wife has arrogated the rights of her husband, and he, smarting under the humiliation, resents her assumption by a morose silence or, chafing under the indignity, frequently rebels against it with violent outbursts of anger. That such a condition must militate against the proper education of the children is evident. The man, indeed, may have such glaring faults as to make it rather hard to respect him, yet at the same time he has redeeming qualities. The latter good qualities and the Will of God which commands the wife to reverence her husband, should be sufficient motive to esteem him and to be obedient to him. A little good will, a generous forbearance, and a spirit of self-denial upon the wife's part, united with earnest prayer for the help of God, will make it easy for her to submit to this fundamental principle of family government.

The father also has his obligations toward the mother of his children. He must love, honor, and respect her. He must protect her, provide for her as well as for the family, and appreciate the happiness of possessing a Christian wife who not only knows but also fulfills her duties towards him and his children and the whole household. These are the wife's inalienable rights. Sometimes it does happen that a husband neglects these duties entirely, or is, at least, very careless about their fulfillment; sometimes he is quarrelsome, rough and uncouth, a slave of some degrading vices and habits. In God's name, dear woman, be a heroine and stand firm in the

fear and love of God; conquer him with the weapons of meekness and patience, persevere with Christ on the way of the Cross and trust to God's mercy. A final victory may be long delayed; but there can be no doubt that at last it will be forthcoming, if mother will only persevere in the use of the means which other holy women employed for the conversion of their husbands and for their own salvation, namely, constant prayer, constant patience and humility, coupled with the tears of a loving heart. Where the husband is lacking in fidelity to duty and is negligent in his religion, the responsibility of the mother for her children becomes doubly urgent and she should by closer watchfulness over them and by more earnest devotion to her own daily duties strive to counteract and offset the father's bad example.

Just as the father should appreciate a faithful wife and dutiful mother as a priceless jewel, so also should the mother thank God if her husband is a prudent, alert, and industrious father, and, besides, is a truly religious man, who is faithful to his daily prayers, goes to church regularly, and receives the holy sacraments at least once a month. The fulfillment of these duties eminently fit the husband and father to be an efficient aid to a truly Christian mother in the difficult task of educating and training children for God and heaven. Therefore, Christian mother and Christian father, bear each other's little faults and do not let the little differences of daily life disturb the sacred peace of your home.

# Chapter IX Prayers

Dear God, make me good, that I may get to heaven!

Dearest Jesus, Thou art mine;  
Let me be forever Thine.  
I am young, and pure my heart,  
O dwell therein, and ne'er depart!  
Heavenly Mother, stand by me,  
That I thy little child may be!  
Guardian angel watch o'er me,  
That my heart from sin e'er free,  
May to God most pleasing be!

A present for thee! What shall it be?  
Thou best and dearest Child!  
The earthly treasures are naught to Thee;  
Thou lovest more the pure and mild.  
So, take our hearts, we give them Thee,  
We give them cheerfully,  
O hide them in Thy own dear Heart,  
And to them love and grace impart.

O my God, I believe in Thee, for Thou art the Eternal Truth!  
O my God, I hope in Thee, for Thou art goodness and mercy!  
O my God, I love Thee, for Thou art the best, the most beautiful, the Supreme Good!  
O my God, I grieve that I have offended Thee!



I believe, O God, I hope in Thee,  
And with all my heart I love!  
O who shall dare to wrest from me  
Those gifts from heaven above?  
I'll guard them with my blood and life,  
And dying I'll exclaim:  
"I believe, I hope, I love my God,  
Forever more the same!"

All that I have, I have from Thee!  
All that I need, Thou giv'st me!  
Thou art so good, Thou lov'st me so  
That other love I will not know.  
I love Thee, Lord, I love Thee, God  
O teach me to love Thee evermore!  
Thy child, Thy own child let me be,  
Grant that all sin I ever flee!

Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee  
For having died for me!  
Let not Thy Blood and Passion  
Be shed in vain for me.

O Mary, dearest Mother,  
O help me every day,  
That through God's loving mercy  
Thy child may never stray.

My parents I commend to Thee,  
Preserve them, dearest Lord to me!

The good they do me, reward,  
And many gracious gifts accord.

### **MORNING PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy  
Ghost. Amen.

With God another day begins:  
Direct it in Thy way,  
And, Jesus, keep me from all sins  
At home, at work, at play.

#### **While Dressing.**

As now I clothe myself, O Lord,  
To Thee I humbly pray:  
O let me ever heed Thy word,  
And always with Thee stay.

#### **While Washing.**

The water flowing from Thy side  
Is, dearest Lord, a saving Tide;  
O let it cleanse me, my salvation win.

#### **Now kneel, fold the hands, and say:**

O God, my Father, Thy sweet care  
Has o'er me watched the livelong night!  
For all the blessings that I share,  
I praise Thee in the morning light.

Protect me also through the day  
From sin, from evil, from distress;  
Whate'er I do, or think, or say,  
O best of Fathers, do Thou bless!  
My Guardian Angel, thee I pray,  
Stand at my side by night and day.  
O Mary, pray before God's throne  
For me to Jesus Christ, Thy Son,  
Whom we all love, whom we adore,  
Whom we praise forevermore. Amen.

**To purify the intention for the day, say:**

All praise and honor be to Thee,  
Thrice Blessed, Holy Trinity;  
Whatever I may do or say,  
For Thee it be, my God, today.  
Forsake me not when dangers loom,  
And save me from eternal doom.

**When the child cannot be present at Holy Mass, let it say:**

Hark! I hear the little bell  
Calling to Holy Mass.  
Dearest Lord, Thou knowest full well  
It calls in vain for me.  
Dear angel, do thou take my place  
And when 'tis over bring to me  
Rich blessings full of grace.

## **NIGHT PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Before I lay me down to rest,  
I raise my heart, O God, to Thee.  
For gifts with which I have been blest,  
I give Thee thanks repeatedly.  
If Thee I have displeased to-day,  
Forgive me, Father, ere I sleep!

**Let the children make a short examination of conscience, and then say:**

I love Thee, my Lord, I love Thee, my God,  
O would that I loved Thee more!  
I am so sorry now for all my sins,  
O grant me Thy pardon and grace!

**Whilst Undressing.**

Lord, take from me whatever might  
Thy gracious eyes displease!

**One Our Father and Hail Mary for the poor souls in Purgatory. Then say:**

Lord, grant the departed eternal rest  
In light perpetual ever blest.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

### **BEFORE MEALS**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Come Jesus, Lord, and be our guest,  
And let these gifts for us be blest.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

### **AFTER MEALS**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

For all these favors now, O Lord,  
Our thanks we gladly give;  
O grant when this our life is spent,  
We may with Thee then live.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

### **PRAYERS FOR PARENTS**

Infinitely good God, Thou who hast imparted to me through my father and mother my maintenance, a Christian education, and so many other benefits, I thank thee for Thy bounty. Grant me the grace ever to show them the obedience that I owe them, sincere love, and great reverence. Never permit

that they should suffer chagrin and trouble through my fault; but keep and guide me in the way of Thy fear and Commandments, as I have been taught. Reward them richly for all the good they have done me. Be their protector in danger, their consoler in every care and anxiety. Grant them long life, good health, and a blessed eternity. Amen.

# Chapter X Maxims and Sayings

Pithy, pregnant maxims and sayings are wise thoughts expressed tersely and strikingly. Watchwords we might call them. The Saints were partial to such little sayings. St. Francis is renowned for his “My God and my All,” St. Ignatius for his “All for the greater honor and glory of God,” and there is hardly a saint who did not have a special predilection for some particular expressive saying. It would be wise if all of us would profit by their example and also choose one or the other for our guidance. Every mother should have a storehouse of them, and should on suitable occasions quote them. The evident truth and wisdom of them cannot fail to impress the tender hearts of your little ones. These proverbs will in later life frequently occur to them, and may prove for them a source of strength in temptation as well as in the fulfillment of duty. The most valuable ones are those taken from Sacred Scripture, in particular, from the New Testament and directly from the teachings of Jesus Christ Himself. Next to these are the sayings of the Saints and, finally, proverbial sayings which are in daily vogue among the common people. Mother should be well acquainted with a number of them, and should, when occasion offers, not only quote them but also explain them.

In the following pages some few of each kind are recorded with the intention of making our mothers acquainted with a choice selection for daily use. There are no doubt better

ones than those recorded and any mothers knowing such may confidently make frequent use of them; but we would earnestly warn against the use of worldly ones which though fairly expressive, are couched in vulgar or rude terms. Mothers must faithfully avoid silly, sinful, and unchristian expressions which children are apt to remember much more quickly.

**My Child, gain heaven and you have gained all, lose  
heaven and you have lost all.**

**If you do only what you please, can you be considered a  
servant of God?**

**We are in the world not to win money, but to win  
heaven.**

**Remember, Child, where'er thou art,  
God sees into thy very heart.**

**Where'er you be and whate'er you do,  
Remember ever: God sees you.**

**Do unto others as you would  
That others should do unto you.**

**God will bless with happy days,  
With store of precious good,  
The child that honors and obeys**



Its parents as it should.

My Child, I would rather see you dead at my feet than in mortal sin. (Words of St. Blanche, the mother of St. Louis.)

First the necessary, then the useful, and finally the pleasant.

Lying is a fatal evil,  
Liars serve their lord, the devil;  
And no one ever will believe  
The child that once did dare deceive.

On Sunday rest and love to pray,  
For Sunday is the Lord's own day.

Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy,  
wealthy, and wise.

Lost innocence and wasted time are never found again.

Little strokes fell great oaks.

Constant dropping wears away the stone.

Never leave till tomorrow what you can do today.

**Judge not and you shall not be judged.**

**Diligence is the mother of good luck.**

**You will never lose by doing a good turn.**

**No Cross, no crown.**

**Many words are not without sin.**

**Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all things else will be added unto you.**

**Fools make feasts and wise men eat them.**

**A small leak will sink a great ship.**

**It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.**

**God is merciful to them who love Him.**

**A fat kitchen makes a lean will.**

**Believe no wrong if you have not seen it; narrate no scandal whether you believe it or not.**

**Famine means unmentionable pain and sorrow, but no famine of food or drink can compare with the**

loss of God's grace.

There is just one fearful thing about death—the moment after.

My life is but the weaving  
Between my God and me;  
I may not choose the colors  
He worketh steadily.

Oft' times He weaveth sorrow,  
And I, in foolish pride,  
Forget He sees the upper,  
And I, the under side.

If now the Cross of Chirst I bear,  
I may be sure His Crown to share.

More things are wrought by prayers than this world  
dreams of.

'Tis easy to sigh, but 'tis better to pray.

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,  
So near is God to man,  
When duty whispers low, "Thou must,"  
The creature says, "I can."

The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.

Kind words are the music of the world.

There is so much bad in the best of us,  
There is so much good in the worst of us,  
That it hardly behooves any of us,  
To rail at the faults of the rest of us.

# Chapter XI Co-operation with Pastor and Teacher

The first aids of a mother in her arduous task of properly rearing her children are derived from the sacramental grace of matrimony. They come to her in the form of supernatural inspirations, interior counsels, admonitions, and encouragements. Besides these there are also external aids, among which the father of her little ones holds the first place; then we may add older brothers and sisters and servants of the household. All of these, if good and virtuous, will at least exert a morally educative influence by their good example and by occasional admonitions. In a wider sense the whole environment of the child, made up of playmates, relatives, friends, and school companions, collaborate with the mother in the moral and intellectual development of the child. Indeed, even such who speak unfavorably of the qualities of her boy or girl may be considered as a help in this task, because through their seemingly unkind criticism, the mother frequently becomes aware of some fault or faults in the children, which might never be detected by her. But by far the most powerful external aid she derives from the pastor of the parish and from the child's teacher at school.

Church and school are, indeed, powerful aids; but they cannot do the whole work, they can merely help. The principal work must be done at home, as well in the matter of instruction as particularly in the matter of discipline.

The education of the child should begin in mother's arms.

Mother should even at this early stage direct the child's attention to the external objects, which may be perceived with the eyes, the ears, or the touch, and thus inaugurate the development of the external senses. As the child grows older, she should assist it in expanding its circle of observation, with patient interest listen to its questioning, and be willing to satisfy its awakening curiosity by answering according to the truth and according to the child's mental capacity. The words the child tries to enunciate she should strive to have it pronounce as exactly and distinctly as possible, especially such as make up forms of prayer, even though the child does not understand them. The good God understands His little child of grace and the Holy Ghost gives it a modicum of perception, through which the child learns to love the holy words it speaks. Gradually the child will acquire through its associations and environment a knowledge of many visible things and conditions, and also a greater knowledge of God, of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, of the saints, and of many truths of our Holy Faith. In this way the foundation is laid upon which the school will erect a still greater edifice of learning and knowledge. In this way the child's interest has been roused and, when the schooldays arrive, the child listens eagerly, attentively, and intelligently to the teachings of priest and teacher, and to the joy of its parents, it makes rapid progress in all its schoolwork.

During its years at school, the child should be allowed sufficient time to study its lessons and perform its homework. The parents should carefully supervise these home-lessons and urge the child to apply itself to all its studies. The parents should also examine the child in its memory-work and from

time to time inquire from its teacher regarding its attention and deportment in school. According to these reports the parents should either praise or reprimand and even punish the child if milder means produce no improvement. The child should as far as possible never miss school. Indeed, parents should strive to teach the child to love attending the school by encouraging words and occasional rewards for faithful attendance. After the day's work is done the child should be allowed to enjoy itself in innocent games and recreations. And just as the love for school must be instilled into the child so also the love of church attendance should be encouraged by every possible means; and it should be urged to attend Mass not only on school-days but also on free days, but especially on Sundays and feast days of obligation.

The discipline which is demanded from the child at school, must be an object of attention at home also, and a mother should assist the pastor and teacher in upholding that discipline. Neither pastor nor teacher will accomplish very much if children have not been taught a high regard for their authority. Hence a mother should inculcate a deep reverence for the priest and teacher in the hearts of her little ones. She should make it plain to them that just as the parents represent the authority of God and in the name of God must exact reverence, love, and obedience, so also the priest and the teacher, being in school and church the substitutes of the parents, are entitled to the same reverence, love, and obedience. She should also in her own words and deeds manifest the esteem which she teaches them to have for priest and teacher; she should never tolerate from her children, nor in their presence from anyone else, any kind of

slurring remarks or reproaches against the priest or teacher. Just as there must be no discord between father and mother, so also there must be no apparent differences between the parents and the proper authorities in school and church.

Whenever differences do occur, they should be amicably settled and should never be argued in the presence of the children. Only by such mutual helpfulness, harmony, and cooperation will the best interests of the child be served and its temporal and eternal welfare by safeguarded.

Parents and children should pray for each other and for the priest and the teacher, just as priest and teacher will pray for them. Indeed, through earnest prayer for relief in each other's needs mutual affection will be upheld, peace will be maintained, and harmony will be promoted. Through prayer for each other we bring upon our efforts the blessings of God, the grace to conquer temptation, and the fortitude to combat all obstacles. Briefly we may affirm that united prayers are the source of every spiritual success as well as the condition of the means to obtain the desired results according to the words of our Divine Teacher Himself who said: "Wherever two or three are united in prayer, they will obtain all they ask for."<sup>1</sup>

A Christian mother must never send her children to a school where the belief in God and His commandments are not taught, where the doctrines of Christ are not accepted, nor Christ Himself is recognized as the Son of God, where Christian principles are made subservient to the principles of the world.

When you send your children to such a school, you are

---

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 18:19



endangering the salvation of their souls, even though such a school may have otherwise the reputation of solid learning. The worldly advantages of such a neutral school may, indeed, be of great benefit to the future temporal well-being of your children, but the danger threatening their spiritual welfare should be the determining factor, and no truly Christian parents will let merely worldly consideration influence the choice of a school for their children. In the choice of a school, mother and father should be determined by the words of Christ: “What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?”<sup>2</sup>

Still circumstances may exist which practically force parents to send their children to a non-religious and neutral school. In this case the parents should investigate the spirit of that school. If it is not antagonistic to positive religion, if there need be no fear for faith or morality, and if the bishop or the pastor also approves the school under the existing conditions, parents may decide to send their children there; but they should also provide in some way for adequate instructions in religion, when they must send their boys and girls to such a school. If the school is downright irreligious or heretical, they should never send the children to it. If parents are at liberty to choose from different good schools, we would earnestly advise them to choose the school where religion and Christian discipline pervades the whole atmosphere, even though the children may not learn so much there as in another.

---

<sup>2</sup> Mark 8:36

# Chapter XIII Preparing a Child for Confession

The sincere confession of sins and faults in union with a sincere sorrow for them and a firm resolution to amend is the best means to root out any bad habits or any evil inclination, as well as to strengthen the will in its determination to practice virtue and fulfill the daily duties and obligations. Confession teaches self-knowledge. Confession reveals the ugly side of our individuality, gives us a clearer view of our responsibility, and proves very vividly that sin, mortal and venial, is an offense, an insult against the supreme authority and majesty of God. Confession, therefore, has a distinct educative value in the development of character such as no other means can supply.

To obtain these results it is important to have the child thoroughly prepared and instructed in the proper manner of receiving the sacrament of Penance. No one can so easily and so effectively contribute to this thorough preparation as a pious father and a pious mother. Therefore parents should, for the sake of their children, make frequent use of the Holy Sacrament themselves. Their example will be the child's first lesson on the subject of confession. The child will be deeply impressed when it observes how for some days after receiving the sacraments father and mother evidently are more subdued, more happy and peaceful, less irritable and less impatient.

When, finally, the time arrives for the child to make its

first confession, the parents should evince a cordial interest in its prospective happiness. They should carefully guard against frightening the child about confession and never represent confession as a difficult and laborious task; on the contrary they should represent it as comparatively easy. They should instill into the child's heart love and confidence towards the priest who hears its confession in the name of Jesus Christ, in Whose name he is also ready to absolve every child, if it is sorry for its sins and resolved never to commit them again.

About a week before the day fixed for its first confession, the parents should begin to pray with the child for the grace to make a good and worthy confession. The Our Father, the Hail Mary, or some other easy prayer will be suitable. The following prayer or at least a part of it may also serve the purpose:

**O Jesus, my God and Savior, I have often been a naughty child, I have been bold and saucy, disobedient and stubborn, and in this way I have displeased You very much, so that You could hardly love me any more. I wish I had never done anything wrong. My Lord, I am sorry for all the naughty things I have done. I will never do them again. I love You, Lord; please, forgive me all my sins and love me again also. Help me to make a good confession, and help the other children too.**

If a child receives sufficient instruction in school, the parents' task will be much easier. All they need do in this case is to let the child tell them what was said in school and then supply what the child may have forgotten. Certainly the task will be much more difficult if the school instruction is deficient. Then the duty will devolve upon the parents to in-

struct the child themselves. The following items may be of great usefulness to them.

Five things are necessary for a good confession:

- 1) Prayer to the Holy Ghost;
- 2) Examination of conscience;
- 3) Sorrow for sin and the resolution to sin no more;
- 4) Telling of our sins to the priest;
- 5) Satisfaction or penance.

The first is prayer to the Holy Ghost. This prayer the parents should have the child repeat frequently, till it has learned to say it devoutly. The following form may well serve the purpose:

Come, O Holy Ghost, and enlighten me that I may know my sins, be heartily sorry for them, and sincerely confess them, and earnestly amend my life.

Then follows the examination of conscience. When the child is quite young and has only learned the rudiments of the catechism, the parents should assist it in making this examination.

A good way to help children recall their sins is to remind them of how they behaved at home, at school, at church, on the street, on the playgrounds, towards father and mother, towards brothers and sisters, towards the teacher, and towards other children. Parents should not ask their children to tell them the wrongs committed, but if a child should in its innocence reveal something which father and mother never expected it to do, they should not become excited over the revelation but use the opportunity calmly to recall the meaning of sin and the punishment which God will inflict for sin.

Children should also be assisted in making an act of contrition, and parents should consider it a privilege to teach them some form of this act. Any of the following will meet the purpose.

**My Father in heaven, I am sorry for all the naughty things I have done because they have displeased You Who are so good and kind, and because I love You. I do love You, indeed I do. Please forgive me and help me to be a good child after my confession.**

**O my God, I am sorry that I have sinned against You, because You are so good, and I will sin no more.**

**O my God, I am sorry for all my sins. I hate them more than all evils, because they deserve Thy dreadful punishments; I hate them because they offend Thy infinite Goodness. Do not punish me as I deserve. Forgive me and I will try not to do these sins again.**

Older and better instructed children should be taught to make their examination of conscience by going through the ten commandments of God, the six commandments of the Church, the nine ways of being accessory to the sins of others, and the seven capital sins.

The first commandment demands that the child recite daily and devoutly its morning and evening prayers, the grace before and after meals, and frequent acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

The second commandment requires reverence towards the names of God, of the Saints, and of holy things. It forbids therefore the abuse of the name of God and of Jesus Christ by

using them as by- words or in cursing and sinful swearing.

The third commandment demands attendance at Mass on Sundays and feast days of obligation, and also attendance at Christian Doctrine instructions; it forbids on Sundays and feast days any kind of unnecessary manual labor, and at all times bad conduct in church, such as laughing, talking, playing, disturbing others at prayer, and inattention during church service.

The fourth commandment requires reverence, obedience, gratitude, and love towards father and mother, towards the priest and the teacher; and these obligations also include that children gladly accept and follow the admonitions of their superiors; that they do not despise parents and superiors; neither offend, deceive, or provoke them, nor wish them evil or speak evil of them. Finally it commands to respect old people and forbids ridiculing them, etc.

The fifth commandment demands that all persons and especially those who are more closely connected with us, as brothers and sisters, relatives and comrades, be treated with respect and consideration and that we should do them no harm either in body or soul. Hence we should fail against this commandment if we are self-willed and disagreeable, contemptuous and hateful, rude and unmannerly, harsh and uncharitable, irritable and revengeful; if we quarrel, fight and strike others or in some other way seek to hurt them; if we curse ourselves and others, endanger our own lives and the lives of others, and unnecessarily inflict pain upon dumb animals.

Finally we fail against it when we are accessory to the sin of others. There are nine ways of being accessory to the sins

of others:

- 1) by counsel,
- 2) by command,
- 3) by consent,
- 4) by provocation,
- 5) by praise or flattery,
- 6) by silence,
- 7) by toleration,
- 8) by assistance, and
- 9) by defense of the evil done.

Tolerating or not punishing a sin is a sin which parents and superiors commit when they are too lenient and indulgent with their subjects. It is evident that children cannot be accessory to the sins of others in this manner, but in all other ways they also can cooperate with another's sin.

The sixth and ninth commandments forbid all unchasteness in thought, imagination, and desire, as well as in looks, words, and actions, and, in short, everything that might lead to such sins, as dangerous reading, dangerous games, dangerous company.

The seventh and tenth commandments demand honesty and justice in all our dealings with others; therefore, they forbid pilfering and stealing, receiving stolen goods and keeping what was found, destroying and injuring the property of others. Children, furthermore, are not permitted even at home to take anything that does not belong to them, nor give anything away without the permission or consent of their parents.

The eighth commandment demands truthfulness as well

as respect for the honor and reputation of our fellow men. Therefore it is a sin against this commandment to tell lies, may they be ever so slight, to insult our neighbor or speak badly about him, whether it be true or not true. To make known secret faults of our neighbor without necessity is called detraction; to brand him with crimes and faults which are untrue is slander or calumny.

The commandments of the Church dictate the manner in which Sundays and feast days must be observed, and this has been referred to in the third commandment of God; but, besides, a child is obliged by the law of the Church also to abstain from flesh meat on Fridays and all days of abstinence, and is also bound to go to confession once a year and to receive Holy Communion at Easter time.

Finally children should be taught to examine themselves regarding the seven deadly or capital sins. Regarding pride they should ask themselves whether they raise themselves above their neighbor or even above God, and think themselves better than others. Sometimes children think they look pretty because of their hair or their dress or their eyes, and like to show off before others, etc. These actions are not real pride, but are indications of vanity and silliness.

Avarice shows itself in wanting everything for yourself, and never sharing with others any of the good things you may have.

Sins of lust are sins of unchasteness, as forbidden in the sixth commandment.

Envy shows itself when you grieve at the good things which others receive, and are glad when they meet with misfortune.



Gluttony is eating or drinking too much, or doing something which is injurious to the health of the body.

Sloth is to neglect the work which you should do, because you do not like to do it or do not feel like doing it; sloth shows itself also in omitting our daily prayers, missing Mass and other devotions in church, neglecting the study of the catechism, etc.

It is not advisable to let the younger children make their whole examination of conscience at one time; let them do it gradually so that their little minds do not tire, and they perhaps get disgusted with the whole matter. Neither should they get the impression as if the examination of conscience and the memorizing of the sins were the most important part in preparing for the sacrament of Penance. It is certainly true that they should remember their mortal sins well and the number of times these were committed; and the child must not be allowed to consider the examination as negligible. Still the emphasis should be given to the necessity of a sincere sorrow for sin and a firm purpose of amendment. Hence in the course of the examination the parents should repeatedly try to elicit in the child sentiments and acts of real contrition. This can be most easily accomplished by pointing out again and again the motives for sorrow in language which will be intelligible to the child. A long discourse on these motives would be of little value. A mother's instinct will naturally find the best method, but for a little guidance herein we have appended a few suggestions.

After having given the child some time to recall its faults, for instance, against the fourth commandment of God, the mother might ask: "Well, my child, are you sorry for these

sins?” Whether it answers, “yes” or “no,” mother should use the opportunity to recall to the child one of the motives of sorrow in the following manner: “My child, remember, that all sins, event the smallest, are insults against the good God and displease and provoke Him very much.”

At another time she might say: “Remember, child, even venial sins are hated by God, and they lead slowly but surely to mortal sin, and mortal sin leads to the eternal punishment of hell; and do not forget, God punishes venial sins very severely even in this world, but especially in the fires of purgatory.” On another occasion she might remind the child of the horror of sin as follows: “Sin, my child, is indeed a very wicked thing, otherwise God would not have demanded that His beloved Son Jesus Christ suffer so many and cruel pains and tortures. To redeem us from sin and from hell the Son of God had to come from heaven, become man, be persecuted and hated and finally shed the last drop of His blood and die for us on the Cross.”

Again mother might speak to her child as follows: “Remember, my child, by every sin you do, you hurt Jesus just as much and even more than the Jews did. The Jews hurt His body only, but by sins you hurt His soul, His Heart, which loves you so much and desires to give you only what is good.”

Finally, a mother might recall to the child all the great favors and benefits which God has bestowed on the child, such as life and health, food and clothing, the grace of baptism and of Christian instruction, the companionship and protection of the guardian angel, etc. Surely all these considerations repeatedly and earnestly retold will not fail to impress the tender heart of your child, and will fill it with a horror for

everything sinful so that it will resolve never to be ungrateful again and never to commit a sin again, because God is so good and holy and sin is so vile and punishable. After you have accomplished this result, it may be very profitable if the mother or the father will recite with the child the following litany:

Lord, have mercy on us!

Christ, have mercy on us!

Lord, have mercy on us!

Christ, hear us! **Christ, graciously hear us!**

God the Father of heaven, **have mercy on us!**

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, **have mercy on us!**

God the Holy Ghost, **have mercy on us!**

Holy Trinity, one God, **have mercy on us!**

Thou who dost call all sinners to penance and the amendment of life, **have mercy on us!**

Thou who dost not take pleasure in chastisement and condemnation, **etc.**

Thou who dost will to preserve every creature from hell and render him happy,

Thou who hast promised me, also, pardon and grace if I am sorry for my sins and never again commit them,

I have sinned,

I have repeatedly and thoughtlessly sinned,

I have trodden under foot Thy commandments,

I have not fulfilled my duties,

I have neither watched nor prayed,

I have not feared Thy punishments,

I have dishonored Thee,

I have irritated Thee,  
I have renewed Thy Passion,  
I have deserved the most severe punishments,  
I am sorry that I ever committed a single sin,  
I am sorry that I ever displeased Thee,  
I am sorry that I was ever disobedient to Thee,  
I am sorry that I was ever ungrateful to Thee,  
I am sorry that I ever departed from Thy love,  
I will now detest all evil,  
I will now be carefully on my guard against it,  
I will now cheerfully overcome myself,  
I will pray repeatedly and devoutly,  
I will consider sin the greatest evil on earth,  
I will rather die than ever willfully commit a single sin  
again,  
Grant me, O God, grace to keep my resolution,  
Enlighten my understanding and strengthen my will,  
Preserve me from temptation and seduction,  
Protect me from the snares of the evil spirit,  
Subdue my evil desires and passions,  
Grant that I may rejoice in virtue and the fear of God,  
Bestow upon me final perseverance in good,  
Give to me a short and easy purgatory,  
Take me to heaven and make me eternally happy,  
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,  
**spare us, O Lord.**  
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,  
**graciously hear us, O Lord.**

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,  
**have mercy on us.**

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, Thou dost love us so much and art willing to forgive us when with a sorrowing heart we come to you for forgiveness. I have been very naughty and disobedient. I have not loved or honored Thee as I should. I deserve to be punished severely. Please forgive me my past sins, because I am sorry for them, and from now on I will never do anything willfully that I know displeases Thee. Love me again , O Lord, as Thou didst love me before. Love me as if I had never sinned; yes, love me more and help me to love Thee also more than anything else. Help me to keep my promise that I may always be Thy good and loving child, and may also give pleasure to my parents and teachers and to all my friends. Amen.

Your child, dear mother, is now ready for the cleansing, healing, and helping graces of the sacrament of Penance. But before sending it to the confessional, instruct it also how it should enter the confessional, teach it the form it should use in beginning the confession, and also the one with which it should close its confession. Finally instruct it also to make a short thanksgiving after confession, and then to say the penance which the priest imposed. Then let your child “show itself to the priest” so that he may bless it and by the words of absolution purify it from the stains of sins and adorn it with the garb of sanctifying grace.

When the child returns from church, receive it, dear mother, with evident signs of joy and admonish it to make

itself worthy of the great mercy it has just obtained. Watch over its conduct closely for the next few days, and remind it occasionally of its good resolutions.

Oh, how much good a Christian mother can achieve by taking a personal interest in her child's confessions! She thereby sows a seed that is bound to bring forth fruit a thousandfold. Surely it requires much tact and much tender solicitude, but all her loving efforts will be richly rewarded when she sees her little ones earnestly responding and striving to make a good and worthy confession. And as they begin in their childhood to appreciate the value of this holy sacrament, she may confidently expect that also in later life they will find in it a source of consolation and of spiritual rejuvenation and strength against the dangers and the temptations of the wicked world. Through their whole lives and in eternity they will be ever grateful to your solicitude which familiarized them with this treasury of grace and opened to them the gates of heaven.

# Chapter XV Care of Young Adults

The periods of childhood and school-life are soon past, and then there begins a period of life which is, indeed, fraught with dangers for your son and your daughter. It is the period of transition in which the life-course of your child is definitely settled, its character firmly fixed, and its vocation decided. It is the period which decides the weal or woe of your child's whole future, both temporal and eternal. During this period the battle between Christ and Satan, between the Church and the World, rages more than ever for the possession of the heart of your growing boy and girl. In this period your child experiences new and strange sensations; and novel ideas, inclinations and desires present themselves; they promise pleasure and more or less insistently demand gratification. On every side the child beholds the alluring appeals of the three-fold concupiscence, everywhere it sees the wanton abandon with which the votaries of the world seem to surrender themselves to every enjoyment and pleasure. Few it sees who follow in the footsteps of Christ, few who mortify their passions and deny their inclinations, and these few are despised and ridiculed. Will your child join the big crowd, or will it follow in the wake of the few?

This is not all that faces your child, dear Christian Mother, in making its choice. Your boy and your girl have started to feel their importance since graduating from school. They are working, they are earning money which every week helps to

meet the expenses for the upkeep of the family. They feel that, because they are contributing towards the family funds, they ought to have more liberty than heretofore and be allowed to be the masters of their time and of their action. The urge of independence is becoming stronger.

They do not want you to interfere with their “fun,” as they call it. All the young people are having good times, why shouldn’t they have them just as well?

These two new conditions—the strange physical manifestations and the urge of independence—are the factors that make it so necessary for the prudent mother to keep her eyes more widely open than ever. If ever, so especially now, a mother should possess the full confidence of her boy and girl and strive to hold it without seeming to pry into any secrets. This may be difficult at times, but, if the child has been reared according to the principles and suggestions laid down in this book, it ought to be comparatively easy. The boy and girl and have come to realize that mother is not unsympathetic, that, while she believes life to be an earnest duty, she at the same time believes that it should be generously interspersed with innocent amusements and recreations and with every comfort and ease that is compatible with Christian ideals and principles. And there need be no special effort to confirm your boy and girl in this view. Having held their confidence for so many years, you need but sympathize with the new spirit that possesses them and, ordinarily they will accept your interpretations of the changing phases of their life. But in her sympathy mother must not compromise her position. She must not only be her children’s sympathetic companion and guide, she must also remain the queen of her



home and assert her God-given right of authority. Therefore, while she may relax somewhat in supervising every detail of her growing children's actions, yet she must not tolerate any willful disobedience in moral problems of importance. The following paragraphs will attempt to show how a Christian mother may cope with the various phases of this new period of her children's life.

In the first place a Christian mother will direct her children at this period in the employment of their time. As long as the children went to school, the school practically regulated their time on account of the demands which their teachers and their lessons made upon them. Since their graduation from school, the children will have much leisure time which must be well utilized if it should not make them dissipated. In every household there should be a regular daily routine, which barring extraordinary cases should be observed faithfully. There should be a fixed hour for rising, a fixed hour for family morning prayer, a fixed hour for breakfast, a fixed hour for going to or beginning work, a fixed time for the noon-meal and the return to work, a fixed time for the evening meal, and a fixed time and a fixed period for recreation and relaxation and enjoyment, for profitable reading, for self-improvement, both intellectual and physical, and a fixed time for family night prayer. The son, having finished school, should be assigned to the work for which his talents, natural gifts, and abilities fit him. It may be that he is fitted for more than just manual labor. In this case his parents should strive to give him the opportunity to become proficient in the profession most suitable to him, may it be law, medicine, business, or some particular commercial pursuit.

He should be encouraged in his ambitions, as long as they do not interfere with the interests of his soul, and if they are not beyond the family finances.

As regards the daughter we would strongly discourage the idea of putting girls to work among strangers at the age of sixteen. We believe in the old-fashioned idea of keeping them at home and teaching them the important occupation of housewifery in some shape or form. There are so many domestic duties to be fulfilled, duties which mean so much for the comfort and the happiness of home-life. Girls should become acquainted with and learn all of them: cooking, washing, cleaning, sewing, darning, fancy work, etc. After girls have become older and after they have been trained in the various duties of housework, they may, if necessary, be allowed to go out to work, but they should be given charge of some of the household duties even then. The principal aim in the training of the girls must be, after all, to fit them for good housewives and mothers.

The next point of importance is recreation. How much recreation should boys and girls have? There certainly must be a limit, though, in general, we may say that it should be plentiful, taking care merely that recreation and enjoyment do not interfere with the proper fulfillment of the daily duties. When pleasures are sought merely for the sake of enjoyment we consider them injurious to the spiritual welfare of a person. If in any way possible, all recreation and pleasure should be provided for at home: music, singing, dancing, interesting books, games, cards, etc. The more attractive and pleasant you can make your home, the less desire your children will have to seek their enjoyments outside, and the

more the family will keep united. Fewer sins are committed in a bright home than in a dull, gloomy one, and this is surely a great gain. As much as possible, the frequentation of theaters, public dances, and amusement places should be discouraged and, indeed, should not be allowed except under the escort of mother or of some discreet elderly person; this should at least be the rule for the girls. Outdoor games, such as baseball, tennis, swimming, skating, and others are very conducive to the physical well-being of the young, and should also be readily allowed, but never to be pursued so far as to become a passion, or an injury to the health.

The choice of companions or friends is a third point that requires the earnest attention of a good Christian mother. All the good which a careful education may have sowed into the hearts of your children can be rooted out again in a very short time by dangerous companions and friends. Experience only too frequently has proven the truth of that Scriptural proverb, "Evil associations corrupt good manners."<sup>1</sup> Mother should investigate thoroughly the moral character of every companion of her son or daughter before approving of the companionship. Innocence and faith are easily endangered, love of God and peace of conscience are easily lost, and neither can be regained except through mighty struggles and severe penance, if at all. Particular supervision must be exercised in your children's associations with persons of the opposite sex. All the warnings that mother ever heard from the pulpit or read in books of instruction should be ever before her mind, so that her boy and her girl may not become victims of the devil of lust who only too often lurks under the

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:33

guise of refinement and etiquette.

The choice of books and other reading material is another grave matter. Mother should never permit any trashy novel to come into her house whether it be gotten at the public library, or be bought at a nearby newsstand. No magazine, pamphlet, or newspaper of whatever type—literary, scientific, political, economic, or social—should be permitted if it contains anything that might be contrary to good faith and good morals. Both the son and daughter should be earnestly warned against picking up indiscriminately every magazine that flaunts gay colors or a catchy title. A good rule which mother should inculcate into the hearts of both her sons and daughters is the following: “Never read a book by yourself which you would blush to read aloud to a respectable person.”

Mother should also gently but firmly urge the practice of weekly confession and communion. She should also recommend devout assistance at daily Mass and at the ordinary church services, and whatever she admonishes her children to do, she herself should practice and induce her husband and the father of her children to fulfill as far as his business or work permits. Here we would also urge mother to have her boy and her girl enrolled in the young men’s or the young ladies’ sodality, and she should send them to the vocational instructions which are occasionally given by the sodality director. Those instructions will no doubt supplement many of her own admonitions and teachings and will keep alive in her children the earlier instructions of their school-days.

It may be that God will inspire your son or daughter with

the desire of consecrating themselves to a higher, to the more perfect life in the service of God. This call should be appreciated, indeed, as a special favor of God, and if your boy be otherwise fitted for the holy priesthood, dear Christian Mother, rejoice! Do not oppose his desire, but urge him to seek the advice of his confessor, who will more thoroughly investigate the purity of the boy's intentions and who will advise the manner of preserving and attaining his desire. And if your daughter desires to devote her life in holy virginity to the care of the sick or to the education of the young and ignorant, encourage her in her laudable aspirations and thank God that He has singled out one of your own flesh and blood for so noble a calling. Indeed, the world may speak about the burying of talents behind gloomy convent or monastery walls, it may deplore what it calls the fanaticism which prompts a young man to forego a brilliant worldly career in exchange for the tame career of a priest, but all the criticism of the worldly-minded should not be allowed to influence your willingness to surrender your daughter or your son to God's service and the service of mankind. Christ's call of your children—If thou wilt be perfect, come and follow me<sup>2</sup>—is, indeed, a pledge of their salvation and even of your own; if you place no obstacles in their way to obey that call.

Matrimony is the other vocation which your son or daughter might choose. Teach your children to consider this state of life also as a holy one, and fraught with momentous and noble obligations; that it entails many sacrifices, sorrows, and suffering, though these are coupled also with many pleasures and with many merits for eternity. In choos-

---

<sup>2</sup> cf. Matthew 19:21

ing a companion for life, the Christian mother should advise her boy or girl against making mistakes. A mistake in this choice will be a misfortune, indeed, for it can never be remedied. Passion and infatuation are poor guides in this decision. Wise reflection and calm, judicious deliberation with father and mother as well as with the confessor are indispensable in making a wise choice, a choice that promises with some guarantee a future of temporal happiness and eternal salvation. Surely physical and intellectual accomplishments and talents will greatly influence the final decision, but “the one thing necessary”<sup>3</sup> for both parties is sincere Catholicity, Christian virtue, and earnest piety. These three form the solid foundation for a happy marriage, all others are merely contributing factors. Associations and friendships with non-Catholics should not be fostered lest perhaps the danger of a mixed marriage arise. Mixed marriages are forbidden by the Church, and this should be sufficient reason to make them odious to a sincere Catholic. A marriage forbidden by the Church cannot be acceptable in the eyes of God, must not be countenanced by good Catholic parents, and dare not be desired by a Catholic youth or maiden.

After the life-partner has been chosen and the engagement has been closed, the parents must not relax their vigilance over the young couple. Liberties and familiarities should not be permitted to them, and they should not be allowed to meet except in the presence of a third person; at least, they should not be permitted to be alone together for any length of time. They should be admonished to receive

---

<sup>3</sup> cf. Luke 10:42

the sacraments frequently before the day of marriage, if possible, every week, to foster a tender devotion to the purest Virgin Mary and her most chaste Spouse, St. Joseph, and thus to prepare their hearts for receiving the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony, and also to escape the allurements of unholy passion.

Let the wedding day be celebrated in a decent manner without too much worldly pomp and clamor. Catholics should always remember that the day of the wedding is a holy day, and that our Lord Himself sanctifies it by deigning to become a guest in the souls of the bride and bridegroom.

After the marriage has taken place the parents should assist the young couple with impartial affection, and in the little ups-and-downs which naturally occur in the course of married life, they should encourage them to bear with patience each other's faults, to rear their children in the fear and piety of the Lord, and in all things to place their confidence in the Providence of God. It is then that parents may expect to reap the fruits of the education they have given their children. In the happiness of their children, in their grateful love, as well as in the reverence in which they are held, father and mother enjoy a sweet and well-earned reward for the innumerable and great sacrifices which they once made. Therefore, father and mother, continue to follow your children with your prayers and counsels, your admonitions and your encouragements. But in your love for them do not during your life-time share all your material possessions with them and thus make yourself entirely dependent on them. Many sad examples show the imprudence of such a proceeding. Many a father and many a mother who relied

too much upon the fine promises of their children and who expected greater filial devotion and love in exchange for their own generosity, were cruelly neglected and their death was hailed with joy by their precious offspring.

In concluding these instructions we would earnestly urge all Christian parents to decorate their homes with some expressive marks of their Catholic Faith, such as crucifixes, holy water fonts, images or pictures of our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, of the Guardian Angel, and of some Saint or Saints to whom they may have a special devotion. We would recommend a crucifix for every bedroom besides a picture of the Blessed Virgin in the bedrooms of the girls as well as of the boys. A beautiful picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus would surely be an ornament even to the most gorgeously furnished parlor. In every bedroom there should also be found a holy water font, which should always contain a generous supply of holy water. Besides these religious articles, each Christian family should possess a number of pious books of instruction and edification which may serve as spiritual reading for the members of the family. We would recommend a large family Bible and a more or less elaborate volume of the Lives of the Saints. Furthermore, a larger catechism with popular explanations of the text should be considered an important general household book. For general spiritual instruction in our warfare against passion, temptation, and sin, Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat* was highly recommended and also extensively used by St. Francis de Sales. Appropriate prayerbooks are Father Lasance's *Young Man's Guide* and *Catholic Girls' Guide*, and for Christian Mothers the prayerbook, *Mother Love*. A special book of spiritual



value is *Introduction to a Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales. There are other books which might appeal more to the individual taste, but it would lead too far to mention them all. Your pastor will surely be glad to give you any desired information and will gladly furnish you also with the addresses of the firms from which the above-mentioned or any other books may be purchased.